



# RURAL REBUILD



STORY **JOYCE TURNER GIONET**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON HARTOG**

Log-house living is not a new concept: it dates back more than 5,000 years, to the Bronze Age in northern Europe.

In Canada, early settlers built log cabins as temporary shelter until they had the time and money to build permanent structures. Log-house living has experienced a resurgence in recent years, in part due to shows like HGTV's *Timber Kings*, set in Williams Lake, British Columbia. According to **Scott Tutching**, owner and VP of operations for **Pioneer Log Homes** (the company featured in *Timber Kings*), the log house is actually a very permanent structure. Built well, it should stand for more than 300 years. In an energy-conscious world, log homes are energy-efficient, thanks to the principle

of thermal mass. Logs are radiant and hold in heat on winter days and keep the interior cool during summer. Build with logs, and there are no harsh chemicals. Wood is prized for its air-purifying, moisture-regulating qualities, reducing the need for venting and air conditioning. There's also a laid-back organic vibe to a log home. Outdoorsy folk like **Martha** and **David McPhee**, owners of **Maranatha Log House Flowers & Decor** in Campbellville, wouldn't live anywhere else. The original home was built in the 1970s at Indian Point on Balsam Lake near Coboconk and owned by the Carnegie family, whose

patriarch and son were Members of the Legislative Assembly in the early Ontario Legislature. It was eventually moved and rebuilt in the town of Campbellville. For many years, it was a family home, bed and breakfast and floral design studio for Dave and Martha. Tragedy struck in early spring 2014 when Maranatha burned to the ground. The couple was determined to rebuild. Five years later the new log house, modelled closely on the original, is complete and both the bed and breakfast and floral design studio have reopened for business. Pioneer Log Homes played a major role in the

*Continued on page 68*



The Douglas Fir staircase is a showstopper, as is the 500-year-old tree in the front entry. **TOP LEFT:** Martha's passion for florals is contagious. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** The Western Red Cedar log exterior tucks effortlessly into the landscape. **BOTTOM:** A door separates the family home from the floral studio.





rebuild. No strangers to the ravages of fire themselves, they have lost entire job sites as forest fires raged across the B.C. interior the past few years. Following an email from the McPhees' daughter, Pioneer agreed to build the couple's new home.

A team of eight carpenters worked 14 months on the project. Like all Pioneer builds, this one was pre-assembled in Williams Lake, then taken down and transported on two trucks to Campbellville. More than 100 logs were used in the 3,200 sq. ft. build; an average cedar cedes two house logs. Western red cedar is prized for its beauty, durability and resistance to rot, mildew and pests. For every tree Pioneer cuts down, it replants seven. The grandson of the company's founder is now harvesting trees his grandfather Bryan Reid Sr. planted more than 45 years ago.

Inside the McPhees' new home, the "Family Tree" – an apt name for the single centrepiece log that supports the entire roof structure – is estimated to be about 500 years old. A particularly eye-catching element is the stunning Douglas fir staircase. Martha calls it the treehouse stairway. Each tread is four-inches thick and five-feet wide – "a fact that should wow any builder," says Scott. Sunlight streams in from two upper windows featuring stained glasswork from the McPhees' neighbour, **Paul Singleton** of **Stonehouse of Campbellville**.

The solarium addition on the rear incorporates a wall of tall



Antique stained-glass windows in the sliding doors add colour and charm. **BOTTOM, LEFT:** An apron sink adds farmhouse whimsy in the kitchen. **MIDDLE:** Furnishings and accessories were thoughtfully selected to blend with the rustic surroundings. **RIGHT:** The bathroom is modern yet simple.



Large kitchen windows look onto the beautiful backyard beyond. **ABOVE:** Floor-to-ceiling wood evokes a cabin-like feel.

windows looking onto wooded conservation lands, home to deer, wolves, coyotes, the occasional curious black bear and a variety of birds. Inset with stained-glass from the 1800s, sliding barn doors, built by Pioneer Log Homes, lead to the kitchen/dining room. In the hallway, the wood doors were imported from Egypt and refinished locally.

The rustic harvest table in the dining room was built by John Bousefield of Era Cabinetry

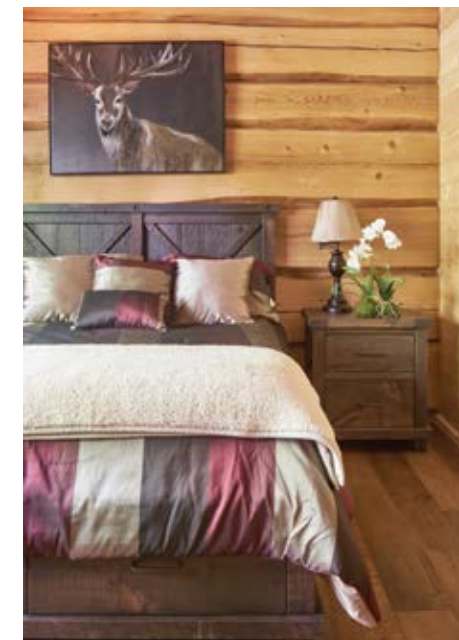
& Kitchens, and accommodates up to 16. A gold mirror rests on a dark oak buffet, both from **Elizabeth Interiors**. The couple lost everything except the clothes they were wearing in the fire, including a beautifully-curated collection of antiques. They have gradually started collecting again, although many of the original pieces were irreplaceable, some of them family heirlooms.

No log home worth its salt would be

without a natural stone fireplace; this one has three gas units, one on each level. Floors are hand-scraped hickory with an antique grey finish.

Over time, logs turn grey with exposure to sun and moisture, and many owners want to preserve the shiny new-wood look. David and Martha are different. They wanted to recapture the aged grey of the original house, so Pioneer created a custom grey

*Continued on page 70*







patina. Chinking – the use of mortar to seal joints between logs – was only included on this house as a ‘throw-back’ aesthetic. Log ends are dovetailed; no nails were used on the log house. David built and stained the wooden window boxes on the upper and lower levels himself. Filled with a profusion of colourful red geraniums and assorted greenery, they add a sensational splash of colour.

A unique finishing flourish, one included on every Pioneer Log Home, is branding. On David and Martha’s house, the Pioneer Log Home mark was burned into the exterior front entranceway. “It’s like passing the torch to future generations,” says Scott, “designating it a house built to stand the test of time.”

LEFT: A flagstone walkway leads to the floral studio.  
BELOW: The studio brims with florals and wreaths for every season. BOTTOM LEFT & RIGHT: Martha creates floral masterpieces just steps from her home.

Maranatha Log House  
Flower Shop

An addition on the left of the home houses the popular **Maranatha Log House Flowers and Decor**. Martha specializes in artificial arrangements, which often incorporate fresh flowers to add drama in different seasons. Holding a dinner party? Entertaining friends? Planning a wedding shower, baby shower or other event? Want your home, office or cottage dressed up for the season? Whatever the occasion, Martha is your go-to gal. She’s been creating unique floral displays for more than 30 years. Even with no occasion imminent, a trip to the shop is a delight. Fresh flowers fill planters and buckets in a riot of colours and textures, nested alongside interesting one-of-a-kind home décor, all of it available for purchase. Feeling creative? Sign up for one of Martha’s seasonal flower-arranging workshops.

The past five years have been difficult, and as they talk about their future plans for the house, the return of hope and joy is reflected in their words. Martha points to a large container filled with vibrant African daisies and strokes the petals of long-stemmed velvety coral roses. “They are so colourful, yet so simple really,” she says. “Flowers are a source of happiness and hope for all of us.” **OH**



**66** years  
**Swiss Interiors**  
Furniture & Home Decor

905.844.3530  
217 Lakeshore Rd. E., Oakville  
www.swissinteriors.com

Four Floors of Furniture    
Proudly Supporting Canadian Manufacturers 



**Maranatha Log House**  
..... FLORAL DESIGN STUDIO .....  
125 Main St. S. (Guelph Line) Campbellville, ON  
**905.854.0444**